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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted at Cumberland College, Kentucky, to determine whether educational policies of the school were related to student retention. A questionnaire was sent to the 126 students who had dropped out of the college during the 1975-76 academic year; 100 students responded either by mail or telephone, but it was determined that 29 of the 126 had re-enrolled. Of the 97 students who did not re-enroll, information was less than desirable for 52; their student folders were used for data. Results indicate that educational policy needs attention. The data sheet information revealed that students who dropped out tended to have lower than average test composites from the American College Testing Program and the Scholastic Aptitude Test and that they tended to register late. The data sheet and questionnaire indicate that retention rates were best for regional students than out-of-area students. A comparison of the responses to results in a 1969 study at the college indicate that dropouts are getting younger. Information is presented about student withdrawals and attitudes are provided, and a sample data sheet and questionnaire and some student comments are appended. (SW)

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DROPOUTS AND INSTITUTIONAL EDUCATIONAL POLICIES
AT CUMBERLAND COLLEGE 1975-76

EDUCATIONAL POLICY SYSTEMS MODULE

by

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Abstract

Numerous studies and published educational articles have stressed the changes taking place in regard to the type of student entering college. Other authorities have established that "the times they are a changin'". Cumberland College recognizes that student retention is important to all colleges, and especially to private colleges. Cumberland also is aware that the society from which students are coming has changed during the past few years and is likely to change more rapidly in the next few years.

Within the context of these facts, Cumberland wanted to determine whether or not educational policies of the school were related to student retention. The method chosen to attempt to determine if institutional educational policy and student dropouts were related was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was sent to the 126 students dropping out of Cumberland College during the 1975-76 academic year.

The procedure used to report the responses given by those replying to the questionnaire was to report them in tables and compare the results to those obtained in a 1969 study by Dr. Fred Roth, professor of religion and psychology at Cumberland. This procedure was used because the results were more workable and easier to understand. The data was

shared with the educational policy committee.

The data produced some significant results and lends itself to some recommendations. As a result of the study, the following specific recommendations were made to the educational policy committee:

- (1) Admission policies should be reviewed. Specific attention should be given to better procedures for treating academically weaker applicants.
- (2) Recruiting efforts would best be invested in an area within a 200 mile radius of the campus.
- (3) The type of high school and type of student desired should be profiled for more effective practices.
- (4) Students under age 20, single, and entering college the first time need special attention. The Orientation program of the College needs revision to deal with these students.
- (5) Study of possible workstudy programs with rolling admissions should be made.
- (6) Policies of the Bursar should be reviewed. Emphasis should be placed on better communication.
- (7) The Advising system and all its functions should be studied with emphasis on improvement.
- (8) Registration Policy needs revision. Attention should be given to advance registration.
- (9) The curriculum should make provisions for dealing with the cultural heritage of the Appalachian region.
- (10) The Official Withdrawal Policy should be retained. Study should be given to better ways of counseling with those choosing to withdraw.

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INTRODUCTION

The major question of this study was to determine how many students withdrew from Cumberland College as a result of an institutional educational policy. The identification of any educational policy systems contributing to student dropout rates was necessary for corrective action to be taken. The establishment of criteria to be used by the Administrative Committee in forming or revising educational policies was important to the institution. Since a study was completed by Dr. Fred Roth in 1969, a comparison of results might further establish changes in student attitudes towards educational policies. The information provided by this study will be significant to Cumberland College since the retention of students is a concern, just as it is a concern in most private colleges. The study of educational policy and student withdrawal relationship is essential to the college.

In order to properly investigate the relationship of student withdrawal and educational policies of the College, two approaches were used. The first involved a biographical data sheet (Appendix A) which could be completed from information housed in the Registrar's Office. The second was a questionnaire (Appendix B) sent to the 126 students that

withdrew during the 1975-76 academic year. Collected data was then analyzed and presented in table form with comparisons being made to similar data collected during the 1969 Roth Study. This format was chosen in order that the people concerned with the educational policy committee might easily distinguish areas of concern. Study results have been provided to the concerned individuals.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

Records in the office of the Registrar at Cumberland College indicate 126 students simply left school during the 1975-76 academic year. This amounts to 8% of the student body. The data will be compared to findings of a similar study by Dr. Fred Roth for the period 1964-69. In this time of smaller college enrollments, particularly in private colleges, it is important for schools to constantly identify factors which cause students to discontinue their educational experience.¹

Since policy often influences student opinion of the institution,² it is essential to identify those educational practices which cause students to leave an institution. This study will provide information of significant value to Cumberland, since the various reasons for students dropping out must be identified in order to develop techniques of retaining students. Many people insist that the reasons for students leaving Cumberland include educational policies,

¹The Effects of Inflation on College and University Finances, Ben E. Laden, T. Rowe Price Associates, Inc., Baltimore, 1976, pg. 4.

²Stopping Out, Judi R. Kesselman, Evans and Company, New York, 1976, pgs. 4-15.

i.e., drop-add rules, class attendance regulations and required chapel.³ The Educational Policy Systems module provides the appropriate opportunity to investigate the reasons for students dropping out. Educational policies related to students dropping out can be identified.

Kessleman says in Stopping Out that disadvantaged students often are not accustomed to the culture a college provides with the many "rules and regulations". This leads to cultural shock and stopping out. Educational policies are rarely developed for student-need reasons; they are most often institutional-need reasons.⁴ Cumberland College has a high percentage of students from a low-income background.⁵ Often students from culturally deprived areas do not have a history of family life which includes development of personalities accustomed to life style adjustments.⁶

The shift in attention from college attendance to other endeavors has caused college enrollments to drop. This in turn has prompted colleges to look at ways of attracting students and then retaining those students. The study of students has included such things as personality, cultural

³Based on an interview with Dr. E. C. Masden, Academic Dean, Cumberland College, April 4, 1977.

⁴Shaping Educational Policy, James Bryant, Conant, McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1964.

⁵The Courier-Journal and Times, Sunday, September 24, 1972, Louisville, Kentucky.

⁶Culture in American Education, Ruth Landes, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1965.

background, and so forth. Michael M. Freedland has identified some 21 reasons why students leave school before completing degrees. He grouped these reasons into three broad categories. The first two were financial and scholastic. The third area he labeled "rapport".⁷ This third category includes those things associated with processes of the institution. Dr. Louis Bender, Nova Lecturer, during the April 2, 1977, class at Greenville, South Carolina, stated that educational policy includes "process of how policy comes about as well as strategies, techniques...". John Demitroff, University of Iowa, groups the reasons for withdrawing into seven categories. While he listed disinterest in school as the number-one problem, he found that educational policy systems accounted for approximately 30%.⁸

In another study, Arnold Menning states that most colleges have attrition rates of between 25% and 75% with most around 50%.⁹ Cumberland College has a rate of about 19%. While this compares favorably with other schools (based on the Menning study) percentages are not the complete story. Cumberland is a small private school; thus 19% of an enrollment of 700 is more significant than 19% of an enrollment of 14,000-30,000 (average university size). Previous studies provide a basis for developing a

⁷"21 Reasons Why They Drop Out", Michael M. Freedland, Industrial Education, 62:70, November, 1973.

⁸"Student Persistence", John F. Demistroff, College and University, 49:553-67, Summer, 1974.

⁹"Attrition", College and University, Arnold J. Menning, 50:753-76, Summer, 1976

case to demonstrate the need for a study to establish reasons for Cumberland students dropping out before completing degrees.

A review of literature found in the Educational Index reveals that the number of students dropping out is quite high around the country and should be dealt with through adequate methods. This point is made by Epstein.¹⁰ Kircher points out that students must be dealt with differently, since students vary.¹¹ Policies should deal with students in order to obtain several objectives. Among these are helping people to become socialized. A policy is usually developed with some educational ideal or purpose stated as the reason. Should students react in a negative way to policy, the policy should be reviewed. A policy is hard to alter even when it is apparent the policy hurts people more than it helps people. This is usually because the policy is developed for the good of the institutional processes rather than the individual's processes. Policies may also be a means of socialization.¹²

Dr. James Conant, in "Shaping Educational Policy", said that educational policies need revision to deal with

¹⁰A Strategy for Education, Herman T. Epstein, Oxford University Press, New York, 1970.

¹¹"Broudy's Educational Aspirations: Reality or Utopia?" Studies in Philosophy and Education, 2:241-258, Summer, 1962.

¹²"A Primer of Political Analysis", D. A. Strickland, E. L. Wade, & R. E. Johnston, Markham Publishing Co., Chicago, 1972.

what he calls the "education revolution." Conant insists that new policies are needed. This study will be the first step toward gathering information as to which policies at Cumberland College need attention. Once some problem areas are discovered, appropriate actions can be taken. Comparing results to those of Dr. Roth for the 1964-69 period is of significance because that study did not make recommendations. Roth simply gathered data relating to the students and reason for leaving Cumberland College. This study should prove to be important to the College in deciding whether or not to make any necessary changes in educational policy.

PROCEDURE

The procedure used included:

- (1) Development of a biographical data sheet (Appendix A) which allowed data to be placed on a common format.
- (2) Collection of data from the folders of the 126 students dropping out during the 1975-76 academic year. The data was collected from folders in the Registrar's Office.
- (3) A questionnaire was mailed to each of the 126 students (Appendix B). The questionnaire used was a revised version of Dr. Roth's 1969 questionnaire.
- (4) Responses collected on the questionnaire were tabulated and the results were presented in table form with raw numbers and percentages being used. This allowed comparison to Roth's 1969 results.
- (5) Data was compiled by using a pencil, paper, and electronic calculator. The compiled data shows which areas of policy influenced students to leave Cumberland prior to completion of their degree programs.
- (6) Results were made available to Committee members and other interested staff members.

Data used in this study was developed from two sources: information housed in the Registrar's Office and the students that withdrew during 1975-76. Information in the Registrar's Office was compiled on a data sheet (Appendix A). Information from withdrawn students was obtained by a mailed questionnaire. Follow-up was made on the telephone to those slow in responding to the questionnaire. A letter accompanied the questionnaire (Appendix C).

In order to establish validity and reliability of the questionnaire, Dr. Joseph Early, Chairman, Cumberland College Department of Mathematics, was consulted for assistance. Dr. Early pretested the questionnaire with a selected group of students in one of his mathematics classes. Dr. Early determined that the questions asked would give the answers that provided the data sought. The questionnaire appears to have reliability, but true reliability will have to be established over a longer period of time.

The questionnaire was administered by mail and allowed students to express their opinions and perceptions. The stage was set by the cover letter, which stressed the College's concern for students and self-evaluation. The compiled responses were collected and reported manually. The instruments used included data sheet, questionnaire, paper, pencil, calculator, and typewriter.

The total population (126 students) received questionnaires. It was determined that 29 of the 126 had re-enrolled, while 97 had not. Information was less than desirable for 52 of the 97 that had not re-enrolled. Since these students were not available, the data in the folder was all that was available. A total of 100 of the 126 responded (either by mail or telephone) to the questionnaire.

Definitions

ACT - American College testing program.
Dropout - Student leaving the campus after classes began.
Educational Policy - Procedure and course of action used by the Institution to effect processes.
Late Registration - Registering after classes have begun.

Permanent Folder - Academic Folder lodged in the Registrar's Office.

Population - Includes all 126 students having dropped out in 1975-76.

SAT - Scholastic Aptitude Test

Withdrawal - Process of leaving school through proper academic channels.

Limitations

The limitations of the investigation included the following:

- (1) Information was less than adequate for some students. The folders in the Registrar's Office did not contain all data on all students.
- (2) The time allotted for the study was brief.
- (3) The measurement and comparison represents only one real assessment of policies.
- (4) Broader studies and student/faculty are necessary before educational policies can be revised.

Assumptions

The assumptions made include:

- (1) The biographical data form fairly collected data that can be compared.
- (2) The data collected represents important information to the policy committees of the College.
- (3) More information will in fact assist the committees in studying the retention problem as related to educational policy.

RESULTS

Since the purpose of the study was to investigate the possible relationship between educational policies and student retention and provide usable data to the appropriate college officials, the simple comparative question-answer format was chosen. The emphasis of the study was for data that could be used in a maximum way with minimum explanation.

The first section deals with the data collected on the biographical data sheet. The information is compared to the data from a 1969 study by Dr. Fred Roth.

It was determined from the data that was in the permanent academic folder that 50% (63) of the dropouts had ACT composite scores of less than 14 and 3 students had SAT totals less than 900. The average score of an entering Freshman on the ACT, according to the ACT profile furnished to the school by ACT, is 16.2. The dropouts appear to be academically weaker students upon entering college. In addition, it was discovered that the high school rank of these students was low. Most (72) were ranked in the lower quarter of their high school class. However, 24 were ranked in the upper 10% of their graduating classes.

Most were lower classmen. Seventy-five were freshmen/sophomores, while the remainder were juniors or seniors.

Table 1 indicates that Cumberland College had experienced a decrease in percentage of dropouts from the border states of Kentucky (-10.4 percent) and Tennessee (-4.6 percent). Additional decreases were noted for dropouts from Virginia, Florida, and Michigan. Dropout increases, since the Roth Study was completed, were determined to have existed for the states of Ohio (+3.4 percent), Indiana (+6.7 percent), and Pennsylvania (+8.0 percent).

Table 2 further shows the position of states as residences for Cumberland College dropouts. This appears to support the finding of Table 1.

Table 3 further substantiates the earlier finding that the College lost fewer local students than it did five years ago. The county of residence for dropout students at their time of enrollment at Cumberland was examined and found to correspond with the state dropout findings. Table 3 indicates that Cumberland had experienced a decrease in dropouts from the majority of the College's regional service area.

Table 4 reports the study findings related to size of the sending high school for Cumberland dropouts. Larger high schools showed increases in percentage of dropouts. Recent Kentucky high school consolidations may have played a role in this development. Other findings lent credibility to the observation that students drawn from outside a 150 mile radius of Williamsburg probably attended larger high schools.

Table 1. State of Residence For Students After Withdrawal From Cumberland College; 1964-1969 and 1975-76 Dropouts

Rank	<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		State of Residence (Two or more Students)	Rank	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent			Number of Students	Percent	
1	43	54.4	Kentucky	1	22	44.0	-10.4
3	10	12.6	Ohio	2	8	16.0	+ 3.4
2	13	16.6	Tennessee	3	8	12.0	- 4.6
6 (tie)	1	1.3	Indiana	4 (tie)	12	8.0	+ 6.7
None	0	0	Pennsylvania	4 (tie)	12	8.0	+ 8.0
4	3	3.8	Virginia	None	0	0	- 3.8
5 (tie)	2	2.5	Florida	None	0	0	- 2.5
5 (tie)	<u>2</u>	<u>2.5</u>	Michigan	None	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	- 2.5
TOTALS	74	93.7**			62	88.0**	

* Rank refers to most to least dropouts (1 = highest rank). Rank was used to show changes in position since the 1964-69 study period.

**These figures will not total 100% since this category is restricted to states with two or more dropouts.

Table 2. State of Residence For Dropouts During Time of Initial Enrollment at Cumberland College; 1964-69 and 1975-76 Dropouts

Rank	<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		State of Residence (Two or more Students)	Rank	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent			Number of Students	Percent	
1	50	61.0	Kentucky	1	11	45.8	-15.2
2	14	17.1	Tennessee	2	4	16.7	- .4
3	8	9.6	Ohio	3	3	12.5	+ 2.9
5 (tie)	1	1.2	Indiana	4 (tie)	2	8.3	+ 7.1
5 (tie)	1	1.2	Pennsylvania	4 (tie)	2	8.3	+ 7.1
4	<u>2</u>	<u>2.4</u>	Florida	None	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	- 2.4
TOTALS	76	92.5			22	91.6	

Table 3. County of Residence For Dropouts During Time of Initial Enrollment at Cumberland College; 1964-1969 and 1975-1976 Dropouts

Rank	1964-1969 Totals		County of Residence (Two or more Students)	Rank	1975-1976 Totals		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent			Number of Students	Percent	
1	12	14.5	Whitley, KY	1	4	16.7	+ 2.2
None	0	0	Hamilton, OH	2	3	12.5	+12.5
3 (tie)	6	7.2	Knox, KY	3 (tie)	2	8.3	+ 1.1
None	0	0	Knox, TN	3 (tie)	2	8.3	+ 8.3
2	7	8.4	Campbell, TN	4 (tie)	1	4.2	- 4.2
3 (tie)	6	7.2	Harlan, KY	4 (tie)	1	4.2	- 3.0
4 (tie)	4	4.8	Laurel, KY	None	0	0	- 4.8
4 (tie)	4	4.8	McCreary, KY	None	0	0	- 4.8
4 (tie)	4	4.8	Scott, TN	4 (tie)	1	4.2	- .6
5 (tie)	3	3.6	Bell, KY	4 (tie)	1	4.2	+ .6
5 (tie)	3	3.6	Leslie, KY	None	0	0	- 3.6
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Perry, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Knott, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Butler (Unknown)	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Letcher, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Clay, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Morgan, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
6 (tie)	2	2.4	Clermont, KY	None	0	0	- 2.4
TOTALS	63	75.7			15	62.6	

Table 4. Enrollment of High Schools from Which Cumberland College Students Graduated; 1964-69 and 1975-76 Dropouts

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>			<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		
<u>Number of</u> <u>Students</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Number of</u> <u>Students</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Percentage</u> <u>Change</u>
6	7.3	Under 200	0	0	- 7.3
31	37.8	200-400	5	20.8	-17.0
15	18.2	400-600	3	12.5	- 5.7
15	18.2	600-800	1	4.2	-14.0
8	9.7	800-1000	5	20.8	+11.1
<u>7</u>	<u>8.5</u>	Over 1000	<u>40</u>	<u>41.7</u>	+33.2
TOTALS	82	99.7	54	100.0	

Results of the current study indicated that dropouts from Cumberland College were younger, unmarried, freshman students. These findings may have been predicted since the Vietnamese Conflict did not then provide the incentive to remain in school that it did in 1964-1969 (see tables 5 and 6).

Tables 7, 8, and 9 present findings of this study that relate to the status of the student at the time of withdrawal from Cumberland College. These findings further substantiate that the dropouts were younger lower classmen than were the dropouts of five to ten years ago.

Table 10 indicates that more students dropped out officially from Cumberland College. This particular finding may have some relevance if by officially withdrawing the students relieved themselves of debt or received reimbursement for tuition. These findings could indicate that family financial conditions played a role in student withdrawals for 1975-1976, an economic recession period. Another factor considered was that these official withdrawals enabled a student to transfer to another college under more favorable conditions than an unofficial withdrawal would have permitted.

Table 5. Age of Students at Time of Withdrawal from Cumberland College; 1964-69 and 1975-76 Dropouts.

	<u>1964-69 Totals</u>		Age	<u>1975-76 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
	7	8.6	Under 20	42	37.5	+28.9
	47	51.9	20-24	40	50.0	- 1.9
	23	28.4	25-29	12	8.3	-20.1
	<u>9</u>	<u>11.1</u>	Over 30	<u>1</u>	<u>4.2</u>	- 6.9
TOTALS	86	100.0		95	100.1	

Table 6. Marital Status of Students at Time of Withdrawal from Cumberland College; 1964-69 and 1975-76 Dropouts

	<u>1964-69 Totals</u>		Marital Status	<u>1975-76 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
	34	41.5	Single	45	75.0	+33.5
	32	39.0	Married	28	20.8	-18.2
	10	12.2	Widowed	0	0	-12.2
	4	4.9	Divorced	1	1	- 4.9
	<u>2</u>	<u>2.4</u>	Separated	<u>1</u>	<u>4.2</u>	+ 1.8
TOTALS	82	100.0		75	100.0	

Table 7. Highest Level of Formal Education Completed by Cumberland College Dropouts; 1964-1969 and 1975-76 Dropouts

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>			<u>1975-76 Totals</u>			Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent	Education Level	Number of Students	Percent	Percent	
11	12.9	High School Graduate	2	8.3	- 4.6	
7	8.2	Less than 1 year college	10	41.7	+33.5	
23	27.1	1-2 years college	8	33.3	+ 6.2	
27	31.8	3-4 years college	3	12.5	-19.3	
<u>17</u>	<u>20.1</u>	College Graduate	<u>1</u>	<u>4.2</u>	-15.9	
TOTALS	85		24	100.0		

Table 8. Number of Semesters Attended at Cumberland College; 1964-1969 and 1975-76 Dropouts

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>			<u>1975-76 Totals</u>			Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent	Semesters at Cumberland	Number of Students	Percent	Percent	
23	28.0	Less than one	21	45.8	+17.8	
20	24.3	One-two	17	29.2	+ 4.9	
9	10.9	Three-four	2	8.3	- 2.6	
10	12.1	Four-five	2	8.3	- 3.8	
8	9.7	Five-six	1	4.2	- 5.5	
4	4.8	Six-seven	0	0	- 4.8	
5	6.0	Seven-eight	0	0	- 6.0	
<u>3</u>	<u>3.6</u>	More than eight	<u>1</u>	<u>4.2</u>	+ .6	
TOTALS	82		44	100.0		

Table 9. Number of Times the Student Withdrew from Cumberland College; 1964-1969 and 1975-76 Dropouts.

	<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		Number of Withdrawals	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
	70	90.9	1	40	62.5	-28.4
	5	6.4	2	1	4.2	- 2.2
	1	1.2	3	0	0	- 1.2
	1	1.2	More than 3	0	0	- 1.2
	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	No Response	<u>23</u>	<u>12.5</u>	-12.5
TOTALS	77	99.7		64	100.0	

Table 10. Status of Withdrawal from Cumberland College; 1964-1969 and 1975-1976 Dropouts.

	<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		Type of Withdrawal	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
	Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
	63	78.7	Official	24	100.0	+21.3
	8	10.0	Unofficial	0	0	-10.0
	7	8.7	Uncertain	0	0	- 8.7
	<u>2</u>	<u>2.5</u>	Official & Unofficial	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	- 2.5
TOTALS	80	99.9		24	100.0	

One indication of the degree of effective planning students exhibited was in the area of late registration. Presumably, a student who had registered late demonstrated less maturity and career planning than other students. Table 11 indicates that the 1975-1976 Cumberland dropouts were more prompt in enrolling than their 1964-1969 counterparts.

Table 12 and 13 report findings related to time of withdrawal during the semester.

Table 14 indicates that student reasons for withdrawal from Cumberland College--at least in the way they responded to a written questionnaire--were more complex than they had been in the past. Given an opportunity to indicate their reasons for withdrawal from Cumberland College, the 1975-1976 dropouts marked more reasons than previous students. Table 14 may appear to measure apples and oranges, but the indication of complexity with regard to reasons for withdrawal should not be disregarded. However, by combining all responses that mentioned "dissatisfaction" as a factor for withdrawal, it was determined that a total of ten students (38.5 percent) reacted positively to this alternative. Comments of dropouts that pertained to Table 14 may be seen in Appendix D.

Table 11. Registration Date

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		Register Late?	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
5	6.4	Yes	0	0	- 6.4
67	87.0	No	19	79.2	- 7.8
5	6.4	Uncertain	4	16.6	+10.2
0	0	No Response	1	4.2	+ 4.2
TOTALS 77	99.8		24	100.0	

Table 12. Period of the Semester When Withdrawal Took Place; 1964-1969 and 1975-1976 Dropouts

<u>1964-1969 Total</u>		Period in Semester	<u>1975-1976 Total</u>		Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
24	32.4	First week	8	33.3	0.9
33	44.5	Second week to midterm	9	37.5	- 7.0
7	9.4	Midterm to final week	3	12.5	+ 3.1
2	2.7	Final week	0	0	- 2.7
8	10.8	Uncertain	4	16.7	+ 5.9
TOTALS 74	99.8		24	100.0	

Table 13. Time of Subsequent Withdrawals for 1964-1969 and 1975-1976 Cumberland College Dropouts

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>		Time Period	<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
5	31.2	First week	10	71	+39.8
4	25.0	Second to midterm	0	0	-25.0
<u>7</u>	<u>43.7</u>	Uncertain	<u>4</u>	<u>100.0</u>	+56.3
TOTALS 16	99.9		14	100.0	

Table 14. Reasons for Withdrawal Given By 1964-1969 and 1975-1976 Cumberland College Dropouts

1964-1969 Totals			1975-1976 Totals			75-76 Study
Number of Students	Percent	(withdrawals) Reasons for	Number of Students	Percent	Percentage Change	State of Residence At Time of Enrollment
16	15.2	Personal Health	0	0	-15.2	-----
16	15.2	Financial Reasons	3	11.5	- 3.7	KY, IND, OHIO
16	15.2	Dissatisfaction	5	19.2	+ 4.0	OH, LA, TN, KY (2)
10	9.5	Family Illness	0	0	+ 4.0	-----
10	9.5	Marriage	1	3.8	- 5.7	IND
10	9.5	Other	2	7.7	- 1.8	KY, TN
8	7.6	Family Problems	2	7.7	+ .1	LA, KY
7	6.6	Military Service	0	0	- 6.6	-----
4	3.8	Transferred	0	0	- 3.8	-----
4	3.8	Employed	0	0	- 3.8	-----
2	1.9	Academic Problems	2	7.7	+ 5.8	KY (2)
2	1.9	Disciplinary Reasons	1	3.8	+ 1.9	NJ
0	0	Financial & Dissatisfaction	1	3.8	+ 3.8	PA
0	0	Family Illness and Financial	1	3.8	+ 3.8	KY
0	0	Marriage & Employment	1	3.8	+ 3.8	TN
0	0	Financial and Personal Health	1	3.8	+ 3.8	KY
0	0	Disciplinary, Dissatisfaction & Transfer	1	3.8	+ 3.8	PA
0	0	Financial, Marriage and Other	1	3.8	+ 3.8	KY
0	0	Financial, Academic and Transfer	1	3.8	+ 3.8	TN
0	0	Financial, Dissatisfaction & Disciplinary	1	3.8	+ 3.8	KY
0	0	Personal Health, Dissatisfaction, Disciplinary and Financial	1	3.8	+ 3.8	OH
0	0	Academic Problems, Dissatisfaction, Employment & Other	1	3.8	+ 3.8	KY
105			26			
99.7			99.4			

The second section consists of the responses to the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained 15 questions dealing with 15 educational policies of the college. Table 15 indicates that most of the students withdrew voluntarily and later regretted having done so. Perhaps some of the 29 students presently enrolled were among those expressing regret.

Table 15. Voluntary Withdrawal

<u>1964-69 Totals</u>			<u>1975-76 Totals</u>		
Number of Students	Percent	Voluntary	Number of Students	Percent	Change
3	3.5	No	1	10	+6.5
82	96.4	Yes	99	90	-6.4
85	99.9	Totals	100	100	

Table 16. Regret Withdrawal?

<u>1964-1969 Totals</u>			<u>1975-1976 Totals</u>		
Number of Students	Percent	Regret	Number of Students	Percent	Percentage Change
2	3	Yes	40	40	+ 37
84	97	No	60	60	- 37
86	100	Totals	100	100	

Table 17 indicates that some were urged not to withdraw, but no one could have swayed them at that point.

<u>1964-69 Total</u>		Could Be Influenced	<u>1975-76 Total</u>		Could Be Influenced
Urged to Stay	Percent		Urged to Stay	Percent	
37	70	1	78	78	3

Table 18 demonstrates that negative feeling towards dropping out of school shifted slightly towards no opinion. This might support some arguments being made by faculty that "today's students show more apathy". Table 19 indicates that at the time of the questionnaire some negative feeling was being experienced towards the Bursar's Office. The Bursar has the responsibility of collecting accounts. Often students do not wish to pay a percentage of the charges upon withdrawal or expect full rather than partial refunds. The College has a policy of pro-rated refunds based on weeks of attendance.

Suggestions made by students for improving the business relationship of the college are listed in Appendix E.

Table 18. Response to Question: "How did you feel about dropping out of school? 1964-69 and 1975-76 Cumberland College Dropouts.

<u>1964-69 Totals</u>		Responses	<u>1975-76 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
26	35.1	Bitter/Very Bitter	8	33.3	- 1.8
38	51.3	Happy/Relieved	12	50.0	- 1.3
10	13.5	No Opinion	4	16.7	+ 3.2
TOTALS 74	99.9		24	100.0	

Table 19. Response to Question: "Evaluate your relationship with the Bursar's Office": 1964-69 and 1975-76 Cumberland College Dropouts.

<u>1964-69 Totals</u>		Responses	<u>1975-76 Totals</u>		Percentage Change
Number of Students	Percent		Number of Students	Percent	
22	47.8	Excellent	5	29.4	-18.4
20	43.4	Good/Fair	7	41.2	- 2.2
2	4.3	Poor	3	17.6	+13.3
2	4.3	Very Poor	2	11.8	+ 7.5
TOTALS 46	99.8		17	100.0	

The advising system and registration are two of the most obvious educational policies students encounter. Cumberland uses a system of advising which utilizes practically all faculty members. The registration system is a McBee manual card system. Table 20 demonstrates opinion of the advising and registration systems.

Table 20. Advising and Registration

	<u>1964-1969</u>				<u>1975-1976</u>			
	<u>Advising</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Registration</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Advising</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Registration</u>	<u>%</u>
Excellent	17	26	5	10	18	25	8	9
Good	6	9	3	6	10	14	17	20
Fair	4	6	2	5	11	15	25	30
Poor	14	22	30	57	4	5	8	9
Very Poor	23	36	11	22	23	35	15	18
No Opinion	1	1	0		6	6	11	14
TOTALS	65	100	51	100	72	100	84	100

Questions 10 and 12 asked for suggestions to improve advising and registration. Responses included:

Question 10: Advisory System

- (1) Allow choice of advisors rather than assigning advisors.
- (2) Get rid of bad advisors, i.e. those who mis-advise.
- (3) Advisors should keep better office hours.
- (4) Advisors should be interested in advising or quit.
- (5) Students should have regular meetings with their advisors.

Question 12: Registration

- (1) Not so many lines to stand in.
- (2) Pre-registration for courses.
- (3) Don't allow upper-classmen to fill-up sophomore courses.

These responses occurred several times in various forms. All the actual responses were found to fit one of

those slots. It appears student opinion is fairly consistent in regard to what needs to be done to improve the advising system and the registration system. It appears the problems in advising are related to personalities and how the student views the advisor in terms of competencies. With registration, waiting seems to be the major problem. No one seems to have the patience needed to complete a totally manual registration in one day.

Table 21 ranks factors which the students rated as to the degree each might have influenced the withdrawal or dropout decision. The rankings are made from the responses to question 13 on the questionnaire (Appendix B).

Table 21: Rankings of Influencing Factors

1964-1969 Totals		Administration Factors	1975-76 Totals	
Rank (1=top)	Weighted Ranking*		Rank (1=top)	Weighted Ranking*
2	50	Rules & Regulations	1	41
6	35	Administration Relationships	5	25
7	31	Business Procedures	8 (tie)	16
Faculty Factors				
10 (tie)	27	Curriculum	2	40
5	36	Academic Facilities	6	24
3	48	Faculty Relationships	7	21
10 (tie)	27	Advising	8 (tie)	16
Service Factors				
1	53	Dormitories	4 (tie)	29
8 (tie)	30	Food	10 (tie)	13
11	24	Registration	10 (tie)	13

Social Factors					
8 (tie)	30	Religious Atmosphere	3	38	
4	41	Social Life	4 (tie)	29	
9	29	Student Relationships	8 (tie)	16	
12	14	Lack of Religious Atmosphere	8 (tie)	16	

* Key to weighted ranking: Very Strong = 4 Strong = 3
 Moderate = 2 Little Influence = 1
 No Influence = 0

Question 14 asked whether or not the student felt he/she profited from their experience at Cumberland. Table 22 represents the responses.

Table 22. Did you profit from your experience?

Number of Students	1964-1969 Total		Number of Students	1975-1976 Total	
	Percent	Responses		Percent	Change
65	85.5	Yes	75	75.0	-10.5
6	7.9	No	25	25.0	+17.1
5	6.6	Uncertain	0	0	- 6.6
TOTALS 76	100.0		100	100.0	

The final question allowed for further explanation of question 15. Generally, students did not wish to comment, other than saying something along the lines of "I just do not feel that I belong at Cumberland right now".

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine how many students withdrew/dropped out as a result of educational

policies during the 1975-76 academic year. The data collected does indicate educational policy needs attention.

The Data Sheet information also revealed that students dropping out tended to have lower than average ACT/SAT composites and tended to have registered late. It is recommended that Admission Policies be studied for better controls relative to the academically weaker student being allowed to enter school during the late registration period.

The information collected on the data sheet and questionnaire indicates that it would appear most advantageous to reduce recruiting efforts beyond a 150 mile radius of Williamsburg. Retention rates were best for regional students and thus increased effort in the primary service area is in order. Table 1 and Table 2 clearly indicated an increased retention problem for out-of-area students. Table 3 shows fewer dropouts among local students. The first three tables clearly indicate a revision in policy related to student recruiting. Since it costs more to recruit farther from the campus, financial reasons might also support the need to concentrate closer to home.

In addition to Tables 1-3, Table 4 also indicates that recruiting policies need attention. Table 4 indicates that Cumberland would do well to concentrate more on smaller high schools than larger ones. Dropouts occurred in greater number on a ratio of high school size. The largest number of dropouts was from those students from high schools of more than 1,000 enrollments. It is recommended that policy

be revised to concentrate on smaller geographic service area schools.

Dropouts are getting younger. The 1975-76 dropouts were younger than those of the 1969 study. These younger dropouts were more often single than married as they had been at the time of the Roth study. Tables 5 and 6 illustrate the change that has occurred. The under-20 dropouts have increased some 28%. Being younger, they are more likely to be single as Table 6 indicates. It is recommended that educational policies and practices be studied to determine if better orientation procedures might be developed to more adequately counsel with younger students. Table 7 and 8 support this recommendation, since these tables show that the majority of dropouts occur during the first year of college. The alarming number of freshmen leaving during their first semester needs attention. The factors of age, marital status, educational level, geographic origin, and college experience seem very interrelated. It is recommended that an educational practice, keeping these factors in mind, be developed to better meet the needs of the students and the College.

There appears to be an increase in the number of times each student has withdrawn (Table 9) and the withdrawals have tended to become more "official". This indicates that students are moving in and out of the College more than they did in 1969, but are going through the proper channels to withdraw. This educational policy seems to be adequate. Many staff members feel the withdrawal system might be too

complicated, but the students appear to be using the procedure at increasing rates. It is, however, recommended that students be made more aware of the advantages of official withdrawal.

Tables 11, 12, and 13 report the data collected in regard to students' time of enrollment and time of withdrawal. There seems to be a trend towards enrolling during actual registration and towards withdrawing before midterm. Most withdrawals occurred before the third week. Refunds of tuition are made through the ninth week (midterm). It is recommended that the relationship between percent of refund and official withdrawal be studied. It appears that the increase in official withdrawals noted in Table 10 and the time of withdrawal (Table 12) are related. Table 13 supports this conclusion. Students making subsequent withdrawals made them during the first week. The withdrawal policy of the Bursar seems to be working.

The reasons stated by the student on the official withdrawal card filed with the Bursar center on "financial" and "dissatisfaction". Table 14 demonstrates that few real changes have occurred among the reasons given by students except in the financial area. The College has long had a goal of never losing a student due to financial need. The administrators often state that no student has ever been denied an education at Cumberland due to financial need. Apparently some of the students do not know this is the policy. It is recommended that students be better advised in financial matters.

Tables 15, 16, and 17 indicate that most withdrawals were voluntary, not regretted by the student, and while they (students) were urged to stay in school at the time of withdrawal no one could have swayed their decision. It is recommended that study be made relative to better methods of identifying problems and providing counseling earlier.

Table 18 and the opinions expressed (Appendix E) seem to indicate that some blame the College in some way for failing them. Table 19 supports this negative feeling. Many of those responding to the question "Evaluate your relationship with the Bursar's Office" wrote in comments about receiving bills on accounts when they (students) felt they should not have to pay. It is recommended that a better understanding of refund and billing procedures be developed among students upon arrival on the campus. Orientation should deal with this problem.

Questions 9-12 dealt with two educational policies every student contacts often: advising and registration. Table 20 indicates the scope of feeling. Question 10 and 12 allowed students to comment. The comments are worth noting. It is recommended that study be given to those comments with serious consideration given to adoption.

Question 13 asked the student to rank factors influencing the decision to withdraw. Table 21 reports these ranks. Educational policies do appear to influence students to leave school. Those factors classified as "Administrative" are directly educational policy systems. Other policy

problem areas included advising, registration, and facilities. It is recommended that a task force be appointed by the Dean to study these areas for possible improvements.

Question 14 dealt with whether or not the student felt the college experience was profitable. While more said yes than no (Table 22), a decline in the ratio of yes responses to no responses has occurred. Since this is strictly a personal opinion, no real recommendation can be made. The significance is that this feeling is probably related to the previous 13 questions.

The final question allowed for freedom to express any opinion. The result was less than expected. Few made any comment, but the central theme of comments appears to be that the student from outside the region is from a different cultural background and might well feel "out of place".

The information collected on the Data Sheet and the Questionnaire applied to the relationship between student withdrawal and educational policies of Cumberland College. They will help to provide a beginning source of data and perhaps the study will serve as an impetus to further evaluation of educational policies. This is important for several reasons, but perhaps most important for student retention and survival of the institution. Dr. John Rouche said it best at the Nova Summer Institute (1976) when he said that the future of colleges in part depends on their willingness to adapt to changes in society. The college population has changed, the educational policies of Cumberland must change.

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DATA SHEET

This first section deals with factual information about the student. The questions have been designed to be answered from information in the Registrar's office.

1. State of residence during initial enrollment at
Cumberland College _____ 1 _____
2. County of residence during initial enrollment at
Cumberland College _____ 2 _____
3. Category which includes present age.
____ (1) Under 20 _____ (2) 20-24 _____ (3) 25-29
____ (4) 30 or over _____ 3 _____
4. Marital status: _____ Single _____ Married
_____ Widowed _____ Divorced _____ Separated 4 _____
5. Highest level of formal education.
____ (1) High school graduate _____ (5) Three to four
____ (2) One or more years of _____ years of college
____ trade school _____ (6) College graduate
____ (3) Less than one year _____ (7) One to two years
____ of college _____ of postgraduate
____ (4) One or two years of _____ study
____ college _____ 5 _____
6. Semesters of attendance at Cumberland College?
____ (1) Less than one _____ (5) Five to six
____ (2) One to two _____ (6) Six to seven
____ (3) Three to four _____ (7) Seven to eight
____ (4) Four to five _____ (8) More than eight
____ 6 _____
7. Graduate from Cumberland College? _____ (1) Yes _____ (2) No
____ 7 _____
8. If graduated from some college other than Cumberland,
give name of the college. _____ 8 _____
9. How many times did student withdraw from Cumberland College?
____ (1) One _____ (2) Two _____ (3) Three _____ (4) More
than three _____ 9 _____

10. Withdrew officially?

____ (1) Yes ____ (2) No ____ (3) Yes and No
____ (4) Uncertain 10 _____

11. Register late for a semester or summer term during which withdrawal occurred?

____ (1) Yes ____ (2) No ____ (3) Uncertain
11 _____

12. During what period of the semester did student initially withdraw?

____ (1) First week ____ (4) Final week
____ (2) Second week to ____ (5) Uncertain
midterm
____ (3) Midterm to final week 12 _____

13. If there were subsequent withdrawals, place a 2,3,4, etc., in the appropriate space for each drop.

____ (1) First week ____ (4) Final week
____ (2) Second week to ____ (5) Uncertain
midterm
____ (3) Midterm to final week 13 _____

14. Reason stated for withdrawal. (by student) _____

14 _____

15. Size of high school from which student was graduated?

____ (1) Under 200 ____ (4) 600 to 800
____ (2) 200 to 400 ____ (5) 800 to 1000
____ (3) 400 to 600 ____ (6) Over 1000
15 _____

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire deals with your opinions. Please be candid in your evaluation.

1. If you voluntarily withdrew from college, did you later regret your action? ☐ (1) Yes ☐ (2) No ☐ (3) No opinion 1
2. If you did not return to college, did you have the desire to return? ☐ (1) Frequently ☐ (2) Occasionally ☐ (3) Rarely ☐ (4) Never 2
3. If you voluntarily withdrew, who encouraged you in this action? ☐ (1) Classmates ☐ (2) Family ☐ (3) Girl Friend ☐ (4) Boy Friend ☐ (5) Teacher ☐ (6) Administrator ☐ (7) No one ☐ (8) Other 3
4. If you voluntarily withdrew, did anyone urge you not to drop out? ☐ (1) Yes ☐ (2) No ☐ (3) Uncertain 4
5. At the time of your withdrawal, could anyone have persuaded you to remain in college? ☐ (1) Yes ☐ (2) No ☐ (3) Uncertain 5
6. How did you feel about dropping out of school? ☐ (1) Very bitter ☐ (2) Bitter ☐ (3) Disappointed ☐ (4) Discouraged ☐ (5) Relieved ☐ (6) Happy ☐ (7) No special feeling ☐ (8) Other 6
7. Evaluate your relationship with the Bursar's Office. ☐ (1) Excellent ☐ (2) Good ☐ (3) Fair ☐ (4) Poor ☐ (5) Very Poor ☐ (6) No opinion 7
8. List below any suggestion you might have for improving the business relationships of the college. 8
9. What did you think of the system of advising students? ☐ (1) Excellent ☐ (2) Good ☐ (3) Fair ☐ (4) Poor ☐ (5) Very Poor ☐ (6) No opinion 9

10. What suggestion, if any, do you have for improving the advisory system? _____

10 _____

11. How would you rate the registration procedures?

_____ (1) Excellent _____ (4) Poor
_____ (2) Good _____ (5) Very Poor
_____ (3) Fair _____ (6) No opinion

11 _____

12. What suggestion, if any, do you have for improving the registration procedure? _____

12 _____

13. Please indicate the degree to which the following may have influenced your decision to withdraw from Cumberland College. Use the following symbols:

V--very strong
S--strong
M--moderate

L--little influence
N--no influence
U--uncertain

_____ (1) Curriculum _____ (9) Food
_____ (2) Registration _____ (10) Social Life
_____ (3) Business procedures _____ (11) Dormitory facilities
_____ (4) Advisory system _____ (12) Religious atmosphere
_____ (5) Rules and regulations _____ (13) Lack of religious
_____ (6) Faculty relations atmosphere
_____ (7) Administrative rela- _____ (14) Academic facilities
tionships _____ (15) Other
_____ (8) Student relationships

13 _____

14. Do you feel that you profited from your experience at Cumberland College? _____ (1) Yes _____ (2) No _____ (3) Uncertain 14 _____

15. Would you like to comment on your answer to question 14?

15 _____

CUMBERLAND COLLEGE

Appendix C

FOUNDED



1889

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR

WILLIAMSBURG, KY. 40769

April 15, 1977

Dear Friend:

We at Cumberland College are in the process of evaluating many of our activities and efforts.

One of our major concerns is for students who began an academic program and did not complete their program of study. I understand that you attended Cumberland College during the 1975-76 school year but did not finish the term.

Please take a few minutes of your time to complete the enclosed questionnaire for us so that we will have a better understanding of our responsibilities in this important area.

I would appreciate it if you will return the completed questionnaire to me in the envelope included within the next three to five days.

Sincerely yours,

R.D. Baker
Registrar

RDB/11c

Enclosure

1975-1976 COMMENTS ON REASONS FOR WITHDRAWAL, TABLE 14, IF
"OTHER" WAS CHECKED:

"God led me to come back home and attend the University of
Tennessee."

"Cumberland College was nothing near what I was led to believe.
Cumberland should have been in operation in the 17th century.
Mahan Hall is nothing but a rat trap. Some of the faculty
should have been sent to monastery."

"Was expecting. Was working full time at C.C."

IF "DISSATISFACTION" WAS CHECKED:

"I did not agree with the system of discipline."

"Dissatisfied with college life in general."

"I wasn't satisfied with the very religious rules. Overall, I
think they were too strict."

"My main interest was music, and I got disgusted because I
didn't understand piano."

"Dissatisfied with the conditions of the school."

"I was dissatisfied with how I was treated because of an
emotional problem."

"The people who were supposed to be so friendly weren't.
Too many outdated faculty! What you need is younger people
with new ideas."

"Slightly dissatisfied because Cumberland College wouldn't
accept some hours I had earned at another school."

1975-1976 COMMENTS ON DROPPING OUT, TABLE 18 CUMBERLAND COLLEGE,

TABLE 23

"Bad, because I spent money, time, and interest and I feel as if I didn't learn anything from those teachers at all."

"To condemn education is wrong--but how and where matter to me. I got the shaft".

"I learned that I can't live in an environment with as many rules and regulations as Cumberland had."

"I withdrew because of family illness and personal financial problems or I would most likely still be at Cumberland."

"The experience there was valuable but I decided to attend another institution when I returned to school."

"I learned a lot about myself and people in general through a very unhappy experience."

"I didn't remain long enough."

"I matured and learned about people and life."

"Even though I feel like it has been an obstacle course trying to continue and graduate, to quote Bill Anderson's song, "I was so richly blessed." I wasn't a Christian until my second semester. My life has been enriched 7x70 or infinite in many ways, particularly in religion. I gave a lot of myself to Cumberland but as with God and 6 years of coaching Little League and Senior League baseball, I received much more than I gave, which was a lot."

"It was a small and personal relation with teachers."

"Kept two Christian brothers at peace."